1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

233 181 castrated later, are generally cut so that they will grow in a shape that pleases their masters. The operation, called *ngat*, is probably performed towards the end of their first year and usually takes place in the dry season, as it is said that a steer may die if its horns are cut in the rains. The animal is thrown and held down while its horns are cut through obliquely with a spear. They grow against the cut. The beasts appear to suffer much pain during the operation and I have sometimes heard Nuer compare their ordeal to the initiation of youths into manhood.

When a Nuer mentions an ox his habitual moroseness leaves him and he speaks with enthusiasm, throwing up his arms to show you how its horns are trained. 'I have a fine ox', he says, 'a brindled ox with a large white splash on its back and with one horn trained over its muzzle'—and up go his hands, one above his head and the other bent at the elbow across his face. In singing and dancing they call out the names of their oxen and hold their arms in imitation of their horns.

233 181 854 The attitude towards cattle varies with varying situations in social life and with changes in social development. As soon as children can crawl they are brought into close intimacy with the flocks and herds. The kraal is their playground and they are generally smeared with dung in which they roll and tumble. The calves and sheep and goats are their companions in play and they pull them about and sprawl in the midst of them. Their feelings about the animals are probably dominated by desire for food, for the cows, ewes, and she-goats directly satisfy their hunger, often suckling them. As soon as a baby can drink animal's milk its mother carries it to the sheep and goats and gives it warm milk to drink straight from the udders.

233 181 857 868 The games of rather older children of both sexes centre round cattle. They build byres of sand in camps and of moistened ashes or mud in villages, and fill the toy kraals with fine mud cows and oxen (Fig. 7), with which they play at herding and marriage. The first tasks of childhood concern cattle. Very small children hold the sheep and goats while their mothers milk them, and when their mothers milk the cows they carry the gourds and pull the calves away from the udders and tether them in front of their dams. They collect urine in gourds and

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

wash themselves in it. When they are a little older and stronger they have to clean the byres and kraals, assist in the milking, and herd the small calves and the sheep and goats at pasture.

FIG. 7. Mud figures of oxen decorated with tassels.

Food and play contacts with the cattle have changed to labour contacts. At this age the interests of the sexes in cattle begin to diverge and the divergence becomes more apparent as they grow up. The labour of girls and women is restricted to the byres and the kraals and is concerned mostly with the cows, while boys herd the calves at pasture, as well as assisting in the kraal,

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

wives will be fertile. Abortion is said to be very rare and practised only by unmarried girls. Though the men of the kraal may hope that monorchids and babies born with defects and deformities will not survive, they do not kill them or let them die. The proper care and nurture of children is the concern of the whole family and household, and from the moment of birth care is taken to isolate the child from any contact which might be injurious to it. Even the father keeps away from the mother's hut for the first few days lest he inadvertently cause it some misfortune. The prohibition on coitus between parents till the child is weaned is seldom infringed, although it imposes long abstinence, for the child is suckled till he can digest solid food and can toddle about homestead and camp by himself. Artificial aids to weaning are rarely necessary, infants passing slowly from the breast to cow- and goat-milk, though sometimes they are sent to their maternal grandparents for some weeks to make the break. Children have first claim in the allocation of milk from the herd, and if there is a shortage it is the adults, and not they, who go without.

The care of small children falls naturally to the mother, and it is she who feeds and bathes them and attends to their other wants. But the father also takes an interest in his infant children, and one often sees a man nursing his child while the mother is engaged in the tasks of the home. Nuer fathers are proud of their children and give much time to them, petting and spoiling them, giving them titbits, playing with them, and teaching them to talk; and the children are often in the byres with the men. The affection of children for their fathers is very striking in Nuerland. I have never seen a man beat his child or lose his temper with him, however aggravating he might be. When a father speaks crossly to his child, as he does if, let us say, the child goes to the edge of a river or among the cattle, where he may be injured, it is evident that the child is not afraid of his loud words and obeys from affection rather than fear. In his first years a child is corrected by his mother and elder brothers and sisters, who may give him a few strokes with a grass switch if he is naughty.

Daughters grow up under the direction of their mothers. Mother and elder sisters give a girl training in household tasks and what moral advice and worldly wisdom they care to impart. The father takes little interest in the affairs of his daughters. His chief concern with them is to ensure that they are well married.

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

868 593 Boys come under their father's direction. He and the other men of the kraal see that they carry out their duties in the care of flocks and herds. Boys learn from their elder brothers and cousins how to fish, hunt, cultivate, dance, flirt, and engage in the other activities of men. A boy can see the stages of his life before him—initiation, courtship, marriage, and the starting of a family and home—and he realizes even in childhood that these stages are bound up with his father's herd, and that he and his brothers have a common interest with their father in the herd. It is very noticeable that when boys talk about the cattle it is in reference to marriage and when girls talk about them it is in reference to milk.

593 In my experience, it is only when a father is selfish or extravagant in his use of the herd that, even when his sons are men, any serious disagreement is likely to arise between them. Even then, young men submit to their father's indiscretions. If they may show their disapproval by going to stay with relatives for a time they say little, partly, no doubt, because they fear a father's anger and curse, but chiefly, I believe, because, in spite of faults, they love and respect their fathers. Though relations between a father and his son may be strained, the sorrow and anxiety of the son should his father fall sick are most apparent. Nuer say that should father and son fail altogether to agree the son may go to live permanently with his maternal uncle, but this would be a most serious offence in the eyes of Nuer, being *dakene mar*, the breaking of kinship. I have never known it happen.

Boys treat their mothers with affection, though they are offhanded with them and are sometimes rude to them. When they are approaching the threshold of manhood a feeling of male superiority seems to affect their attitude to their mothers. I was told that a youth would never interfere on his mother's behalf should his father be angry with her, though should the father wish to beat her the son would not reveal her hiding-place lest she [842] should curse him. A mother's curse prevents a man from begetting male children. Fear of it was the reason given me for the care Nuer take of their mothers when they are very old, carrying them on their shoulders from village to camp and from camp to village, but, here again, I think that natural affection is a stronger motive.

My observations of the relations between parents and children do not permit me to develop the subject beyond such general impressions as I have given. I would like, however, to draw attention